



Land & Environmental Art (Themes & Movements)

By Jeffrey Kastner, Brian Wallis

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The traditional landscape genre was radically transformed in the 1960s when many artists stopped merely representing the land and made their mark directly in the environment. Drawn by vast, uncultivated spaces of desert and mountain as well as by post-industrial wastelands, artists such as Michael Heizer, Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson moved earth to create colossal primal symbols. Others punctuated the horizon with man-made signposts, such as Christo's Running Fence and Walter de Maria's The Lightning Field. For Richard Long, journeys became works of art while Dennis Oppenheim immersed his entire body in the contours of the land. Survey Brian Wallis discusses the key artists, works and issues that define Land Art historically, as well as its later ramifications. Works This book fully documents the 1960s Land Art movement and surveys examples of Environmental Art to the present day. Earthworks, environments, performances and actions by artists ranging from Ana Mendieta in the 1970s and 80s to Peter Fend in the 1990s are illustrated with breathtaking photographs, sketches and project notes. Documents Jeffrey Kastner has compiled an invaluable archive of statements by all the featured artists alongside related texts by art historians, critics, philosophers and cultural theorists including Jean Baudrillard, Edmund Burke, Guy Debord, Michael Fried, Dave Hickey, Rosalind Krauss, Lucy R Lippard, Thomas McEvilley and Simon Schama.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

If ever a series could elucidate the many forces active in contemporary art, it is Phaidon's "Themes and Movements." Divided into three major sections beginning with a survey by cultural critic and curator Brian Wallis, the book defines land and environmental art and places it in a broader context. The second section, presented by critic and editor Kastner, contains classic examples of work starting in 1947 with a maquette by Isamu Noguchi and ending with a 1996 proposal by Mark Dion. Each work is illustrated chronologically with expanded captions noting intention, process, and exhibition history. The last section is loaded with articles, reviews, and artists' statements that directly support both the survey and the works. A book like this is badly needed to consolidate a subject that has often been scattered into many categories; here Smithson, De Maria, and Christo appear alongside Ukeles, Mendieta, and Chin. Some of the artists are more conceptual while others are more sculptural, but nearly all have taken their work outside the museum setting. A virtual tour of an exhibition that spans more than four decades and thousands of miles; highly recommended for academic and large public libraries. ASusan M. Olcott, Columbus Metropolitan Lib., OH
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Review

'What makes the book invaluable is the comprehensiveness of its illustrations and the fascinating collection of documents in its final section.' (Modern Painters) 'The inclusiveness of this compendium of sparkling photographs and previously published texts ... is practically encyclopaedic.' (College Art Association U.A.) 'What an enticing book this is. It is great fun to browse through at leisure and it also serves as a serious scholarly reference.' (The Art Newspaper) 'This worthy tome ... A good coffee table book to impress those art college and environmentalist friends.' (Harvey Nichols Magazine) 'An excellent introductory essay by the critic Brian Wallis lists the key artists (Christo, Holt, Long, etc.), works and issues that define Land Art historically, as well as its later ramifications.' (Venue) 'This volume appears in a new Phaidon series, Themes and Movements, concerned with the documentation, both verbal and visual, of post-war art. ... All the key practitioners are here (Smithson, Heizer, De Maria, Christo, Long etc), along with some less familiar names, and the photographs - for most of us, the only access to these works - are accompanied by a generous, imaginative selection from contemporary texts." Architects' Journal "Land and Environmental Art is so massive it's almost land art itself. ... huge, handsomely designed... The photographs in the book are gorgeous (the opening panorama of De Maria's The Lightning Field is worth the book's price alone).' (Azure Magazine) 'This extraordinary book ... In his Survey, Brian Wallis gives a good overview of the art historical context of the early works, demonstrating their genesis in relation to minimalism and the modernist ideologies of critics such as Greenberg and Michael Fried. He also manages to give a sense of the radical ferment of the time: the earliest earthworks were made at the height of the Vietnam War, around the time of the student riots in Paris. ... What makes the book invaluable is the comprehensiveness of its illustrations and the fascinating collection of documents in its final section. Divided by the colour of their headlines into artist's statements, critical comment, and writings on the cultural contexts of land and environmental art, these documents vastly expand the sweep of the book. From contemporary reviews and interviews with artists to extracts from historical texts, novels and exhibition catalogues, this section could have stood alone as a source-book and an evocation of the times and thinking behind this art.' (Modern Painters) 'The chief merit of this stout volume is its documentary value. Anyone interested in this sphere of art-making should acquire the book forthwith.' (Burlington Magazine) 'The inclusiveness of this compendium of sparkling photographs and previously published texts by artists, critics, scientists, and essayists is practically encyclopaedic. ... Wallis's sophisticated analytical voice.' (College Art Association, USA

(www.caareviews.org)) 'Land and Environmental Art is a wonderfully conceived and lavishly packaged survey of environmental art from the 1960s to the present. It provides a rich array of resources to help readers to understand and appreciate this tradition. ... Were Land and Environmental Art to end here, it would already be a splendid book, but a third section, titled 'Documents', offers some 100 pages of excerpts from a variety of sources, all of which have a bearing on the works presented earlier. Most of the excerpts are brief and they constitute a wonderful intellectual smorgasbord. ... What an enticing book this is. It is great fun to browse through at leisure and it also serves as a serious scholarly reference.' (The Art Newspaper) 'How, then, will this sumptuous offering from Phaidon be used in Britain? The hope is that it will rapidly take its place as the big book on the subject and gradually inject critical rigour and a sense of history into current British art in and about landscape. Certainly it deserves that role. Here at last are all the vital texts and images in the field gathered together and attractively arranged.' (Paul Usherwood, Art Monthly) 'An essential addition on an art practice, whose legacy continues to influence the work of contemporary artists, landscapers, and architects.' (Art & Architecture Journal)

About the Author

Jeffrey Kastner, based in New York, is a writer on art and culture. Senior Editor of Cabinet magazine, he is a former Senior Editor of ARTnews, and Contributing Editor of Art Monthly. As well as lecturing on art in America and Europe, Kastner has contributed reviews and essays on contemporary art and popular culture for numerous magazines, including Artforum, Art & Design, Flash Art, The Economist and frieze. Brian Wallis is Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions at the International Center of Photography, New York. As well as curating, he has taught Critical Theory at Yale University and was McCracken Fellow at New York University. Wallis has authored and edited numerous books on contemporary culture, among them Art After Modernism (New Museum/David Godine, 1984), Blasted Allegories (New Museum/MIT Press, 1986) and Constructing Masculinity (Routledge, 1995). In 1996 he curated the exhibition 'Counterculture: Alternative Information from the Underground Press to the Internet' at Exit Art in New York. Wallis was formerly senior editor of Art in America and a curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, where he organized several exhibitions including a Hans Haacke retrospective in 1986.

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Louis Hudson:

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